

09a REV

This is Friday the 7th of October, 2005. We are in the book of Revelation, chapter 8. We're looking at the beginning of the trumpet judgments and the scene in heaven that is described by John in connection with that. As we address ourselves to the study of God's word, it's always a good idea to begin by acknowledging and cultivating the ministry of God's Holy Spirit.

We do that by taking a moment to go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to set aside the cares and the responsibilities, the tasks and the demands of this life to refresh our souls and nourish our spiritual life through the study of your word and through fellowship with believers of like mind. We thank you for the gifts that you have distributed amongst us.

We thank you for each one who is here. We pray that as we try to gain a better understanding of your word, that God the Holy Spirit will find us teachable and will implant in our hearts those things that will best equip us to live in a way that is pleasing in your sight. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. As I said, the 8th chapter of Revelation, the cracking open of the 7th seal causes an interruption in the normal activities of heaven. In the opening of every previous seal, it was followed by noise.

Did you notice? If you go back, just keep your finger there at 8, and in the beginning of chapter 6, John says, I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, Come and see. Crack open the seal, thunderous voice, come and see. Seal number 2 in verse 3, I heard the second living creature say, come and see.

Another, we take it, thunderous voice. Verse 5, the 3rd seal, I heard. Verse 7, the 4th seal, I heard.

Verse 9, the 5th seal, I saw under the altar the souls, and they cried out saying, and so John hears this cry from under the altar. And then in verse 12, the 6th seal, there was a great earthquake. The sun is black, the moon becomes like blood, mountains being moved out of their places, and all of this great terrestrial disturbance.

It's implied there that that would be noisy. This wouldn't be like a silent film. It would be pretty catastrophic.

So, it's kind of strange that after opening noisy seal number 1, number 2, number 3, number 4, number 5, number 6, you get the idea by now that when the 7th seal is open, everybody's ready to cover their ears, and there's just silence. These songs of praise that have been continually floating around the throne that John has described, the chants of

the angels glorifying God, have all ceased. It's just silence, an ominous silence, a dreadful silence.

Then, as we look at the beginning of chapter 8, I saw the 7 angels who stand before God, and to them were given 7 trumpets, then another angel having a golden censer. So, we have a total of 8 angels in this scene. The 7 angels are called the angels of the presence, or the word here is enopion, before the face of, literally.

Now, when it says in the presence of God, this is enopion, they stand before God, and these angels were actually the stuff of Jewish traditional understanding, extra-biblical belief, drawn from primarily literature like the book of Enoch, where these angels or archangels were named, and you know the names of a lot of these. There is Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, Raphael, Amraphel, I forget who the other two are. Did I say Ariel? Anyway, there's 7 of them that are named.

And so, it would come as no surprise to a Jewish listener to hear that there were 7 angels standing before God. I can tell you with near certitude the name of one of these angels, and it's Gabriel. How do I know that? Keep your finger on Revelation chapter 8, and turn back to Luke chapter 1, verse 19.

Luke 1, 19. This is Zacharias in the temple. He goes in.

The angel is speaking to him, telling him about his son to be born, John the Baptist. Zacharias says, How will I know these things are going to happen? I'm an old man. My wife has advanced in years.

Kind of the Abraham and Sarah picture. You start the Old Testament age of Israel with this kind of extraordinary birth from old people, and you end the Old Testament age with this extraordinary birth from old people. Another one of those nice little symmetries that God builds in.

So, the angel in verse 19 of Luke 1 answered and said to him, I am Gabriel who does what? Who stands in the presence of God. This is not just a sort of random detail. This is the identifier of the function that Gabriel serves.

He is one of the angels, one of the few angels who stands in the presence of God. God is not mobbed by legions of angels. He's got a throne room.

He's got restricted access. This would be the equivalent of the cabinet of the president, the high cabinet advisors in the British monarchy. People would study that kind of thing.

And you have the order of the bath and the knight of the garter and that kind of thing. And you think, well, what are these people who stand around with articles of underwear for the king? But these are honorary titles. The garter and the bath and that sort of thing imply intimacy and closeness to the king.

And it's actually an office of state and has a function related to the execution of the rulership duties as they pertain to the citizenry, as they pertain to the governmental function of that monarch or that potentate. And so we expect that in the same way, when you find beings described in this fashion, they are more than tokens. They're not just cigar store Indians.

They're not just totem poles sitting there. Oh, well, look, there's an angel in the presence of God. It's not a big surprise that this means something.

These are the inner circle. You get the idea this could have been who God was talking to when he said, let us make man in our own image and after our likeness. Of course, the plural there would be, in the first instance, referring to the other members of the Trinity.

But we know that the sons of God are up there. We know that a lot of what God does is mediated through angels. Communication, dealing with nations.

We're going to see this in Daniel later on when we talk about the prince of Persia and Michael and your prince and one thing and another. God mediates a lot of what he does through the angels. He doesn't roll up his sleeves and do it all himself.

He, in the same way that parents in a household, you've heard me use this illustration before, but to me it's very meaningful because you think, if God's all powerful, why would he bother to use angels? If he wants to know what's going on at the Tower of Babel, why doesn't he just go down there himself? But he says, the report has come to me and because of that report, I'm going to go see for myself. Well, if you're omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent, why do you need to go anywhere and why does anybody need to tell you anything? Of course, people have actually used this to try to throw rocks at the omni-fill-in-the-blank nature of God. They say, well, if he's so powerful and so knowledgeable, then why does he have to go see things and this is a mistake in the Bible, etc.

Well, what is the legitimate answer to this question? We have a lot of things that we do in a household. We have small children. We could just run around and do them all ourselves, endlessly and forever, right? But part of the reason we involve our children in the activities of the household is so that they can learn.

Many times things are not done as well. You say, okay, empty the trash. When we get all done, there's trash everywhere.

We say, wash those dishes. When we get all done, we have to go back and wash them again. We say, pick up your clothes and put them in the hamper and when you look in the cracks and behind the bed, you find half the laundry that never made it.

We say, one of my chores when I was growing up was cleaning the bathroom. When you've got six people using one bathroom, the tub needs a good scrubbing once a week

and when you're a little guy, you can't get that done very well. So you do that and later on you find your mom in there doing it again and it's kind of humiliating.

You say, well, gee, I'm incapable of even dealing with ringing around the tub here, but why do we do that? It isn't that it can be done better by the little ones, but it's a learning exercise and once they become competent and can do those things, well, it's a great relief. Of course, not that God would need a relief, but by way of analogy, God can delegate and involve His creatures, both angelic and human, in the execution of His plan. I mean, that's the model that He's given us.

It's the model we follow in our life and it's going to be something similar. God chooses to have His sentient creation execute and fulfill various aspects of His government, His policy and His plan. So we would expect that God would have a hierarchical structure and of course He does.

He's got high-ranking angels, medium-ranking angels, low-ranking angels and this ranking reminds me of mercenary groups such as the Nazis left over, the SS troops that were left over at the end of World War II and you had battalions, you had an entire battalion that had nowhere to go, couldn't return to their land, they were afraid of reprisals, a lot of them had lost their families and their cities had been bombed into the Stone Age anyway and so they went and joined the French Foreign Legion as a unit and where this guy, the commander of the battalion had been a colonel in the SS, well now he's a colonel in the French Foreign Legion. The sergeants become sergeants, the corporals become corporals and they retain their rank, the corporals didn't suddenly become staff officers and the staff officers didn't suddenly become snuffies and enlisted men, they maintained that order. So when Satan and his angels fell, the rank and the order and the general structure seems to have been preserved and when Paul talks about the fact that there are principalities and powers and rulers, these are different levels of authority or responsibility or I suspect capability.

I think angel differs from angel in glory just as star differs from star. The stars are used to represent the angels in the heavens and we've got bright stars and you've got dim bulbs and we would expect that whatever angelic history is, it's something not that different from ours. We know that we are going to be various and differing in our reward and our inheritance and our opportunities and our capabilities in the resurrection.

Paul talks about this over in Corinthians. So, these seven angels stand in the presence. Are they the same or overlapping with the four cherubim that seem to surround the throne? I don't think so.

I think those four-faced cherubs in the vision of Ezekiel and in the vision of John are distinct unto themselves. John calls them the four living creatures. These are not four living creatures.

These are seven angels of the presence. I don't think Gabriel is one of the four that surrounds the throne. He is an angel of the presence.

I stand in the presence of God, he tells Zechariah. So, he is one of these seven. I have one caveat to that, however.

This is not a unique idea to me. What I'm about to tell you is a unique idea to me. At least I couldn't find it anywhere.

But it's reasonable to assume that Gabriel is one of these seven. But I'm going to suggest something different to you about Gabriel here momentarily. Because how many angels are there in the presence here? There's actually eight.

There are seven plus one. And as you flip back to Revelation 8, he says, Then another angel having a golden censer came and stood at the altar. Another angel having a golden censer.

What does the golden censer represent? We've looked at this already. He's given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. What does this typify? What does it bring to mind for us? We have the same situation, the same layout in the tabernacle, don't we? Where God in the Holy of Holies is pictured as residing at the mercy seat over the Ark of the Covenant.

Two cherubim. And then outside the veil you have the golden altar of incense. And this seems to be an earthly representation of a higher reality in heaven where right in front of God's throne, and we have to try to use our imagination to picture it, but here's God sitting in heaven, center of the glassy sea, four living creatures surrounding the throne, seven angels of the presence perhaps ranged in seats or standing.

Gabriel says they stand, I guess they don't need seats. They must not be sitting. He says he stands in the presence, so scratch the seats.

They're standing there. And then another angel who comes up to this golden altar that is before God's throne with this censer and incense mixed with the prayers of the saints and he offers it on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended before God from the angel's hand.

So this cloud of smoke, and again this is language of symbolism, it's a vision, ascends, fills the air in front of God's throne. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar and threw it to the earth. So this is a two-step process.

The censer comes in filled with incense and prayer. That is poured out on the altar and comes up before God. Now the censer is empty.

So he takes the censer, he gets coals of fire from the altar. You remember the fire? We

talked about that fire in Exodus. Where did that fire come from that was in the altar out front and from which they took coals to light everything else? Where did that fire come from? When Aaron first put the sacrifice on that altar, fire came out from the presence of God and consumed that sacrifice and lit the altar, didn't it? And God said that fire is never to go out.

Anybody that brought fire from somewhere else, like the sons of Aaron that came up with the strange fire, no tiki, no washi. You don't bring the right kind of fire. You try to bring the wrong fire, the right fire comes out and you become carboniferous and they haul you off by the corner of your robe.

So this fire is holy fire from the altar. And that's the kind of fire that gets scooped up in this censer by this angel and everything is real ceremonial up to the point that he just takes the censer and throws it down on the earth. And that's kind of unceremonious.

And you get the idea that this is a gesture of judgment. Why would you throw fire at the earth if it's the holy fire from God's throne? What have we seen anytime that fire comes out from the altar? It incinerates whatever it hits. It incinerates the altar, takes the top off Mount Carmel, blows away the disobedient sons of Aaron.

And so here that same fire is scooped up. This is holy fire. And it represents the holy justice of God.

And because it is scooped up in the censer, we don't just have a lightning bolt going out. It's in the censer. The censer comes in with prayer and incense which has come up from the earth and it goes back to the earth carrying fire.

So what kind of a connection does that suggest? This judgment is in response to those prayers. God has heard the prayers of His people. Those prayers got stored up.

There was a delay. It's not like, Oh, Lord, please. Oh, thank you, Lord.

That was fast. You pray and you pray and they're stored up in the censer. Maybe some of those prayers are getting kind of old.

Been there quite a while. But it ultimately is answered with this judgment. So this is the scene that we have in the presence of God.

The seven angels who have the seven trumpets prepare themselves to sound. The angels of the presence are the ones who are going to blow a horn. You've heard this New Orleans jazz music.

Oh, Gabriel, blow your horn. I always wondered, where do they get Gabriel blowing a horn? Maybe it's here. Because he is ostensibly, at least, or believed by many to be one of these seven angels of the presence.

However, I would like to suggest something else to you. Gabriel is an interesting individual. Do you have a guess or a mental estimate of how many times Gabriel is mentioned in Scripture? I think you can get pretty close to this just based on your resident knowledge.

He's mentioned by name four times. Twice in Daniel. Twice in Luke.

Let's go look at the passages in Luke because we were just there. Luke chapter 1. I already mentioned verse 19 and 20. I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God.

I was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. What are the glad tidings? Your son's going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He's going to go before Him, capital H, in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers disobedient to the wisdom of the just, make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

The Lord is coming. Your son is going to prepare Him. This is what I have been sent to tell you.

Now, what was Zacharias doing? What is going on when Gabriel shows up? Flip the page back. Verse 8. Zacharias is serving his priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot to burn incense when he went into the temple. Zacharias is supposed to go in and burn incense.

And the whole multitude of the people was doing what? Praying outside at the hour of incense. So what is the setting when Gabriel shows up in the New Testament? Big crowd of people praying and the priest is going in to burn incense. Here is Gabriel.

And what is the substance of Gabriel's message? Your prayers have been heard and the answer is essentially the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, is wrapped up in the answer to your prayer. In this same chapter, a little bit later, verse 26 and following. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. Having come in, the angel said to her, Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.

When she saw him, she was troubled at his saying. Consider what manner of greeting this was. The angel said, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

You are going to conceive, bring forth a son, call his name Jesus, he'll be great, and so on. Mary says to the angel in verse 34, How can this be, since I do not know a man? The angel says, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the highest will overshadow you. That holy one which is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is now the sixth

month for her who was called barren. For with God, nothing will be impossible. Mary said, Behold the maidservant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word.

And the angel departed. Now, it doesn't say anything about Mary praying necessarily, although I think we could surmise that she was a woman of prayer because she is a highly favored one. But Gabriel appears and gives a message, and what is the message? It's all about the Messiah, right? Okay, turn back to Daniel, chapter 9, actually, chapter 8, verse 15.

It happened when I, Daniel, had seen the vision. This is the vision where he's by the river in Shushan, the river Ulai, and he sees the ram and the two horns on the ram and the goat and one thing and another. And then a holy one is speaking, verse 13, after he sees this vision.

I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to that certain one who was speaking, how long will the vision be concerning the daily sacrifices and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot? We'll see this pretty soon in our study of Daniel. I just want to get enough context to understand this. So he sees these two holy ones.

One is talking, and the other one asks the talking one a question. The talking one says, for 2,300 days, then the sanctuary shall be cleansed. Then it happened when I, Daniel, had seen the vision, this is verse 15, and was seeking the meaning.

Now, how does Daniel seek the meaning of a vision? He asks. This is what Daniel ever does. Back in chapter 1, or chapter 2 actually, when Nebuchadnezzar has his dream, he says, O King, give me some time.

And then he goes back and prays, right? To get the vision and the meaning. You can look in just the preceding chapter, in chapter 7, verse 19, he has seen a vision. The visions of his head trouble him.

So he asks the truth of it. This is verse 15 and 16. I came near to those who stood by, and I asked them the truth of it.

Verse 19, I wish to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the others. And so, Daniel asks. He's a man of prayer.

Daniel prayed three times a day. Got in trouble for it later. So, he saw the vision and was seeking the meaning.

In verse 15, how do you think Daniel is seeking the meaning? He's praying. That's what he does when he wants the meaning. Suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man, and I heard a man's voice between the banks of the Ulai.

Now remember, he's not anywhere near the Ulai. The Ulai is in Persia. He's in Babylon.

He's in vision. He is in Shushan, the citadel. So, have you ever had a dream, and then you thought you woke up from the dream, but you're actually just dreaming another dream? Well, Daniel has sort of finished watching the first part of the vision, but he's still in the vision.

The ram-goat scene has played out, and he's standing there, and he's still seeking the meaning of it, but he's still in the vision. He's still by the river Ulai. So, there's one having the appearance of a man.

This is a man in his vision. The man's name is Gabriel. Make him understand the vision.

So, he came near where I stood. When I came, I was afraid, fell on my face, but he said, Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end. Then Gabriel proceeds to explain this whole vision to Daniel.

Daniel prays. Gabriel shows up. Tells him a prophecy concerning the Messiah.

Same basic pattern. You have people praying. You have people beseeching God.

Gabriel shows up, gives them information that is related to the Messiah. Chapter 9, verse 20, Now, while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God, for the holy mountain of my God, yes, while I was speaking in prayer, did you get all that? How many times did he say, I was praying, I was supplicating, I was confessing, I was praying? By the way, did I tell you I was praying? The man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. And he informed me and talked with me and said, O Daniel, I have come forth to give you skill to understand.

Seventy weeks are determined. So much is going to happen to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince. Verse 25.

So, we begin to see that there is something of a pattern here. Gabriel seems to be in this pipeline of prayer. People pray.

Gabriel shows up. Explains to them that their prayers have been heard. Shows up in response to their fervent prayer.

And gives them information regarding the Messiah. This happens at least four times. And it's arguable that later on in chapter 10, you have Gabriel showing up again, although he is not named.

But his ministry is extremely similar. Daniel is weak. He touches him and strengthens him, which is the same thing he does in chapter 9. So, it's possible that he actually

shows up but he is named four times.

So now, having reviewed all of that, turn back to Revelation chapter 8, verse 3. Another angel, having this golden censer full of prayers, comes up. Brings those prayers before the throne of God. And then he is the same one that goes back and essentially sends the reply, sends the response down to earth.

And what is the response? Holy fire. What did we see in Revelation chapter 1 in the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ? He is all about fire. The parts of him that are not flaming are reflecting the flame.

Burnished feet of fine brass. But you can't even look at his face and his hair. They're glowing.

Everything is reflecting fiery judgment. So, I offer you the thought that another angel here may in fact be Gabriel. He may be the one who brings in the prayers and brings out the answers.

Now, as long as I'm on a roll of speculation here, let me offer you one more. When we studied earlier chapters of Ezekiel, Ezekiel chapter 28 and looked at Isaiah 14, what did we see Scripture saying about the original role of Lucifer? He was the one who passed things in and brought things out from the presence of God. He was the guardian cherub singular who covers.

Now, was he replaced with seven angels? Was he replaced with four angels? Was he replaced by one angel? Is Gabriel the replacement guardian cherub of the throne? Possibly. It's interesting that we have the first guardian cherub named O shining one son of darkness. And we also have this one name that we know of an angel in heaven associated with the throne of God.

This idea of another angel, by the way, in Revelation occurs first here in Revelation 8.3. We're going to see it again in chapter 14, Revelation 14.17 in connection with the whole grapes of wrath thing. Another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also having a sharp sickle.

And another angel came out from the altar who had power over fire and cried out with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle saying thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth for her grapes are fully ripe. And these other angels, an angel that comes out from the temple. What is the temple? That's the dwelling place of God's glory where the presence of God is thought to be.

The coming out from the altar, of course, these are two different angels, of course. But the idea of another angel is always associated with these presence angels at a minimum. Revelation chapter 7 and verse 2 when we saw the sealing of the 144,000 servants of God.

Four angels are holding back the winds. Then another angel ascended from the east with the seal of the living God. There is a single angel who holds the seal of the living God.

And he's the one that says don't harm anything until we have sealed the servants of God on their foreheads. So, Revelation chapter 18 verse 1 After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was illuminated with his glory and he cried mightily with a loud voice saying Babylon the great is fallen and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hated bird. For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury.

Then a different voice from heaven says come out of her my people lest you share in her sins, lest you receive of her plagues for her sins have reached to heaven and God has remembered her iniquities. We'll be covering Revelation 18 of course in due time. So, the last reference is Revelation chapter 14 and verse 6 after John sees the ones we've already talked about the 144,000 who were the virgins follow the lamb wherever he goes in their mouth is no deceit or without fault before the throne of God.

Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth. Every nation, tribe, tongue and people sang with a loud voice fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water. And another angel followed saying Babylon is fallen.

So, in a couple of these passages you have a pair of another angels if that makes any sense. Okay, Revelation chapter 8. This angel delivers the prayers, offers the prayers, gets the fire, casts it on the earth, then the trumpet judgments begin from the seven angels of the presence. Now, I would be willing to bet a shekel or two that either one of the angels of the presence or the angel of the censer is Gabriel.

He stands in the presence of God and that's what these angels do. We have seen that after this half hour of silence and then this scene of the prayers being enacted before God these trumpets sound. I will remind you of the suggestion that the seals give an earth-oriented view of the judgment of God in the last half of the tribulation period.

It actually begins at the beginning. The writers who come forth are four aspects of the rule of Antichrist and you proceed forward and end up with the great earthquake at the end. The trumpet judgments present and it's kind of like low, middle and high.

The middle ground is the angelic view and the trumpets are all associated with angels. It is the angels who blow these trumpets and each time the angels blow a trumpet, something bad happens. Hail and fire mingled with blood are thrown to the earth.

This, of course, speaks of circumstances and occurrences that are beyond human control. You've heard, I saw a special recently about, I forget what they call it, near earth orbiting space debris, comets, asteroids, stuff from the Kuiper belt and so on that comes swooping in. They think some of this stuff actually got chipped off of the earth by previous impacts back before, you know, in the early stages of the earth and big impact stuff gets blown into space.

Same thing has happened with Mars. Chunks of Mars have gotten blown off of that planet, float around in space. We hit them and it hits the earth as a meteorite.

We open it up and sample little gas bubbles and things and lo and behold, it's identical to the Martian atmosphere and what we know of the Martian surface. We say this is a chunk of Mars and we didn't have to go to Mars to get it. It came to us via this intermediate path.

Well, I would submit to you just as an aside that if a meteorite is ever actually found, it hasn't happened yet, but if they ever find a meteorite that has got some sort of evidence of microbial life in it, that meteorite came from earth, got blown into space. We circled around however many thousand times and finally came back and swept it back up and it is a returning chunk. It's not life that spontaneously formed in some other place.

If they ever find life in a meteorite or a piece of a comet or any other weird stuff floating around, I promise you, it's going to be a piece of the earth. It came from here, took the microbes with it, brought them back and when they hail it as a great proof of abiogenesis or evolution, you can just laugh and say, you ninny, don't you know, that just came back from the same place it left. Well, I say all of that to say this angelic symbolism here, angels blowing trumpets and look at the type of judgments.

These are celestial judgments. Stuff descends on the earth from on high. Hail, fire mingled with blood rains down on the earth.

I can't even imagine and I wouldn't want to be here to see what this literally is. Whatever it is, it's not good. It's bad.

People are going to be crying out to die when this starts happening. Second trumpet, great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. It doesn't take a great leap of imagination to, in fact, you can go to the movies and see this.

How many movies have they made just in the past five years about something big from outer space coming through the atmosphere and hitting? A third of the living creatures in the sea die. A third of the ships are destroyed. This thing hits the ocean, not the land mass, but it basically boils the ocean, traumatizes the environment and wrecks shipping, wrecks everything in the harbors, creates a tsunami and kills a bunch of aquatic life.

Third angel sounds, a great star fell from heaven. So far we're batting a thousand on

stuff up high coming down and hitting the earth. This messes up the freshwater.

This goofs up the underground streams and rivers, wormwood. The fourth angel sounds, a third of the sun is struck, a third of the moon and a third of the stars. Again, a celestial catastrophe, atmospheric problems.

There's an angel in verse 13 who flies and says, woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet. Three woes, three blasts, three remaining angels who are about to sound. Well, they give you a chapter break here just before the sounding of the fifth angel.

And without trying to go into too much detail on these first four trumpets, you will notice that they are in a set just like the first four seals were a set. You have four things happen and then you have a break of some sort. Now, what is four the number of in biblical symbolism? Four is the number of completeness in earthly terms, the four points of the compass, the four dimensions that define spatial reality.

It is the layout of the camp in Israel. By the time you box the compass there, you've got all four. You have three constellations in each quarter of the heavens.

And three is the number of heavenly perfection. Four is the number of earthly perfection. You multiply earthly perfection times heavenly perfection and you get 12, which is the number of Israel.

Israel is God coming from heaven to earth. Israel is the means by which the people through whom the Messiah comes to redeem the world. So the four times three relationship there is reflected.

Four plus three gives you what? Seven, another kind of completion. So four earthly completeness, earthly perfection, if you will. These three things that the Lord hate, yea, four, actually these six things that the Lord hate, yea, seven are an abomination unto him.

Seven is that number of completion in terms of God's interaction with the earth. Well, this is a good place for us to break. We're at the beginning of a new chapter.

We've completed the first four trumpets. So when we come back, we'll pick up at the beginning of chapter nine and take a look at the sounding of the fifth trumpet.